



Jackson Women's Health Organization

Tenn. abortion clinic closes under law similar to Miss.

KNOXVILLE, Tn. (BP and other reports) — Mississippi pro-lifers are hoping the state's sole remaining abortion clinic will meet the same fate as a Knoxville clinic that closed after a doctor with admitting privileges at a local hospital.

The Volunteer Women's Medical Clinic was forced to shut down after a Tennessee law requiring abortion doctors to have admitting privileges took effect July 1. The clinic was no longer able to provide abortions with-

out an approved physician.

"More and more Americans are beginning to see the value of life," said Jim Henson, a Mississippi abortion mission leader in Jackson. "The trend continues in that our citizens are becoming more pro-life. The fact that an abortion clinic closed in Tennessee and that favorable pro-life rulings have been issued in the courts give hope to the issues we

see CLINIC on p. 9

NAMB initiates effort to reach Arabic-speaking N. Americans

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — For the first time on a national level, Arabic-speaking Southern Baptist leaders gathered at North American Mission Board (NAMB) offices in Alpharetta, Ga., to discuss jointly reaching Arabic-speaking North Americans.

The 16 Arabic-speaking Southern Baptists from six states formed the Middle East and North Africa Baptist Fellowship to penetrate lostness among North America's Arab population.

"Coming together will help us get a better idea of the challenges we each face," said Gorashi Gangi, the pastor of Sudanese Christian Mission Church in Atlanta. "Then we can face them together."

I found out everyone has challenges, but some of them are the same as I face, and I can learn from them."

Discussions at the meeting this month were preliminary and focused on developing a vision statement and goals for the new fellowship. Leaders discussed major challenges in reaching fellow Arabs for Christ, planned future meetings and agreed to try to expand the group to 50 Arabic-speaking leaders in the next year.

Representatives from New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, and Michigan participated in the inaugural fellowship meeting.

Aslam Masih, NAMB's national coordinator for Muslim people groups and South Asians,

initiated the meeting to mobilize Arab Southern Baptists in NAMB's Send North America campaign, a strategy to penetrate lostness through evangelism and church planting. Currently, Masih noted, Southern Baptists have no Arabic-speaking churches planted by Muslim-background believers in North America.

Masih worked with Decatur, Ga., layman Mike Sabbagh of Arabic Baptist Church, who presided over the first meeting, to find potential attendees and draft an agenda.

"All the North Africans and Middle Easterners are working in different cultures," Sabbagh said. "Once we identify the

see NAMB on p. 9

11-year-old Christian arrested in Pakistan

WASHINGTON (BP) — Controversy continues to swirl around Pakistan's blasphemy law after the arrest of a young Christian girl for defiling words from the Quran.

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari has asked the country's Interior Ministry for a report about the Aug. 16 arrest of Rimshah Masih, described as an 11-year-old with Down syndrome in various media reports.

Even so, Nina Shea, director of the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom and a former chairman of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, suggested an ominous fate for the girl, in a National Review Online blog Aug. 21.

Any person accused of blasphemy — disproportionately Christians and other religious minorities — faces murder by vigilantes, even if he or she is merely accused or even acquitted, Shea noted.

"In July in Punjab province, a mob whipped into a frenzy by radical leaders hunted down a man thought to have blasphemed against Islam, beat him to death, and burned his body outside a police station," Shea wrote. "In other cases, defendants awaiting trial, or even those who have been released or acquitted, along with the acquitting judge, have been murdered or threatened with murder."

The high rate of vigilantism surrounding the law makes it an

easy way to persecute religious minorities with false accusation or settle personal scores, various media noted.

Two high-ranking Pakistani officials who criticized the blasphemy law, minister of minority affairs Shahbaz Bhatti and Punjab governor Salman Taseer, were gunned down by Islamic radicals.

While the U.S. State Department speaks of "misuse" of the blasphemy law, the law itself must be opposed, Shea wrote. "No reform or legal tweaking can perfect this law," she noted. "It is an irredeemably unjust statute that is routinely used to persecute minorities, crush reformers, and in the process subvert the rule of law and individual freedoms."

The current case started when the nephew of the girl's landlord said he saw Masih holding a burned copy of an Islamic religious text that included quotations from the Quran, according to The New York Times. According to some reports, the girl had inadvertently burned the papers while cleaning.

The nephew then informed a local cleric, who helped stir up initially apathetic residents. Hundreds of neighbors gathered outside her home and demanded the police take action, threatening to burn down Christian homes and burn the girl alive themselves.

"On Friday I got reports that in a village on the outskirts of

see SEP 06 2012 9

Hurricane relief donations accepted

The Disaster Relief Task Force of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) is now accepting donations for hurricane relief as the 2012 hurricane season picks up speed with named storm Isaac. Tax-deductible donations should be mailed to MBCB Business Office, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Checks should be made payable to MBCB, with "Hurricane Relief" noted on the memo line. Donations can also be made online at www.mbc.org; click on "Donate online" at bottom left of page.

For more information, contact the MBCB Men's Ministry Department at cwright@mbcb.org. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1654, ext. 334. For disaster relief updates, visit www.mbc.org.

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From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

Our Mississippi Baptist garden

In Mississippi Baptist life, as in Christianity as a whole, we are the benefactors of the sacrificial actions and efforts of the spiritual giants who preceded us. They planted this remarkable Baptist garden in which we live, then others watered it, and we live in the blessings of their faithfulness every day.

One of those spiritual giants, among the many Mississippi Baptists have produced, is Margaret McRae Lackey. She was born in 1858 in Copiah County, the fifth of nine children born to James and Elizabeth Lackey. She grew up doing what most girls in Mississippi did in that era. She played games with her friends, went to school, did her chores at home, and attended church.

Margaret Lackey went on to attend Hillman College in Clinton, which we now know as Mississippi College, one of our three Baptist-affiliated institutions of higher learning in the state. She studied to be a teacher and indeed taught for many years in Mississippi schools.

Raised in the Baptist tradition of the day, Lackey — who never married — had a deep love for missions whose goal it was (and is) to spread the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to people who had never heard of the Savior. She used her teaching skills to help the children in her church learn to share her love of missions.

She also utilized her talent as a gifted poet and writer to help Christians understand the importance of missions. She was the author of several studies on missions.

In 1912, Margaret Lackey became the first paid leader of the Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU). Her passion for missions was obvious to all who met her. She once wrote, "Sisters, we have done passing well this year, but, oh, the untouched multitudes of women and children in Mississippi whose souls are crying silently yet know not for what they are crying."

After a storied career, Margaret Lackey retired in 1930 from her

position as corresponding secretary of Mississippi WMU. Many more Mississippi Baptist women, inspired by her model life, have been raised up by the Lord for Kingdom service since then.

In 1903, Margaret Lackey was among those who led Mississippi WMU to begin a special annual observance to emphasize the importance of state missions. That special observance eventually turned into the Season of Prayer for State Missions.

In 1935, the offering taken during the Season of Prayer for State Missions was named in honor of the woman who today remains one of Mississippi Baptists' most outstanding leaders: the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering.

Margaret McRae Lackey died in 1948 just a few days short of her 90th birthday, having lived during a most memorable time in Mississippi and American history. As a child, she witnessed the Civil War and the privations of Reconstruction. As an adult, she lived through World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. No doubt, her life experiences convinced her of the importance of bringing everyone she could to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The first state mission offering in 1903 received a total of \$294.38. The 2012 goal for the Margaret Lackey State Mission Offering is \$2 million. Miss Lackey would be pleased to know that the work in which she so earnestly believed has been carried on in her name for these many years.

Today the Margaret Lackey State Missions Offering encompasses a multitude of important state programs, such as Christian camping, church planting, disaster relief, literacy, and volunteer missionary assistance. Gifts to the offering make possible many of the Mississippi Baptist programs that exist today.

Now it's our turn to tend to the garden. May we be found faithful in this and all endeavors we undertake in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and in remembrance of spiritual giants like Margaret Lackey.

Who really was the first U.S. missionary?

Earlier this year, Jeremy Webber at Christianity Today magazine asked: Was the first U.S. missionary black, not white? Referencing the little-known George Liele (1750-1820), Webber rightly questioned whether this freed slave should supplant Adoniram Judson as the first Protestant missionary from America.

Not only was George Liele the first Protestant missionary from America, but his departure for Jamaica in 1782 actually puts him ahead of the widely recognized progenitor of the modern missions era, the British Baptist William Carey [for whom Baptist-affiliated William Carey College in Hattiesburg is named].

The right ordering of these pioneers of Gospel advance has been noted in recent years by Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., first in a biographical sermon on Liele and then in various publications, most recently in his book, *Ten Who Changed the World*. Akin writes, "[Liele] was the first Baptist to leave his homeland and take the Gospel to foreign soil."

As early as 1964, E. A. Holmes, then professor of church history at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla., noted in an essay on Liele that clarified the matter: "Though supported by no church or denominational agency, [Liele] became the first Protestant missionary to go out from America to establish a foreign mission, ten years before William Carey set out from England" (source: biblicastudies.org.uk).

Discovering this important corrective in recent years has been one of the most instructive things for me as one who loves the rich historical and theological heritage of the Baptists. As I teach students, the pursuit of every fact and detail in the spirit of careful and colorblind scholarship often leads to new discoveries of monumental significance.

As I have researched the life of Adoniram Judson over the last few years for a collaborative book project that seeks to honor the bicentennial celebration of his departure from America in 1812, I was faced with the very task of how to classify Judson's work.

After originally categorizing Judson, as most have throughout history, as the first



Guest opinion

with Jason Duesing

American missionary, it was Akin who shared with me the life and ministry of George Liele. Delighted to learn of Liele's proper place in history, I gladly changed the subtitle of the volume of Judson from, "A Bicentennial Celebration of America's First Missionary," to "A Bicentennial Celebration of the Pioneer American Missionary."

In the volume, Akin and I are joined by Paige Patterson, Nathan A. Finn, Robert Caldwell, Gregory A. Wills, Keith Eitel, Candi Finch, and Michael A. G. Haykin. With regard to the proper ordering of Liele, Carey, and Judson, we make the distinction that George Liele is properly the first missionary in the modern era.

Carey, in England in 1792, is the second chronologically, though the first to create a missions-sending agency and to be sent in an organized and formal manner.

Judson, then in 1812, is third overall, the second American, and the first to organize and receive the commission of an American board for the sending of missionaries.

While all three men are pioneers in their own settings and all overcame significant opposition and obstacles to take the good news about Jesus to those who had yet to hear — even at great cost — George Liele is worthy of particular commendation in our day as he advanced the Gospel while this nation still gripped tightly to the constrictive fetters of slavery.

Duesing serves as vice president for strategic initiatives and assistant professor of historical theology at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth. This column first appeared at TheologicalMatters.com, a blog of Southwestern Seminary. It appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

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WORLD NEWS

Germans battle over tax breaks, privileges for same sex couples

WASHINGTON (BP) — A group of lawmakers from German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party has called for same sex couples in civil partnerships to be given the same tax breaks as heterosexual married couples, continuing a trend in Europe toward legal recognition of same-sex relationships.

The idea faces skepticism among some of Merkel's traditionally minded German colleagues, who may be wondering about the long-term effects of the European experiment with sexual radicalism.

Granting same-sex couples the same income tax breaks enjoyed by heterosexual married couples would add to a string of departures from conservative orthodoxy under Merkel's leadership. Those have included abandoning military conscription and speeding up Germany's exit from nuclear power.

Worldwide, 10 nations have legalized homosexual marriage since 2001, most of them in Europe: Netherlands (2001), Belgium (2003), Spain and Canada (2005), South Africa (2006), Norway and Sweden (2009), Portugal, Iceland, and Argentina (2010). This year Scottish politicians proposed a plan to do the same.

Stephen Baskerville, professor of international relations at Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Va., and visiting lecturer at the Anglo-American University in Prague, said Europeans are generally more liberal on issues such as same-sex relationships and more supportive of the welfare state.

"As far as social consequences, Europeans can afford these luxuries more than Americans without feeling the consequences right away because they have centuries of moral capital built up by Christian faith," he said.

European societies have on many issues a cultural consensus with roots in Christianity, he said, with contributions from medieval constitutionalism, Renaissance, Reformation thought, and the Enlightenment.

For example, Baskerville said, the Czech Republic is reputedly the most atheistic country in the world, yet it

has, compared to the United States, relatively low rates of divorce and out-of-wedlock births.

"A Czech friend explains this as the vague notion that such things are simply not right and should not be done," he said.

In adopting the sexual radicalism that was first nurtured and propagated in the United States, Baskerville said, "Europe is squandering this moral capital, and as it does so it imports American-style problems: divorce, out-of-wedlock births, a welfare underclass, crime, and so on."

Baskerville added ironically, "At precisely the time when Europeans are confronting the limits of the welfare state, the U.S. seems determined to vastly expand its own."

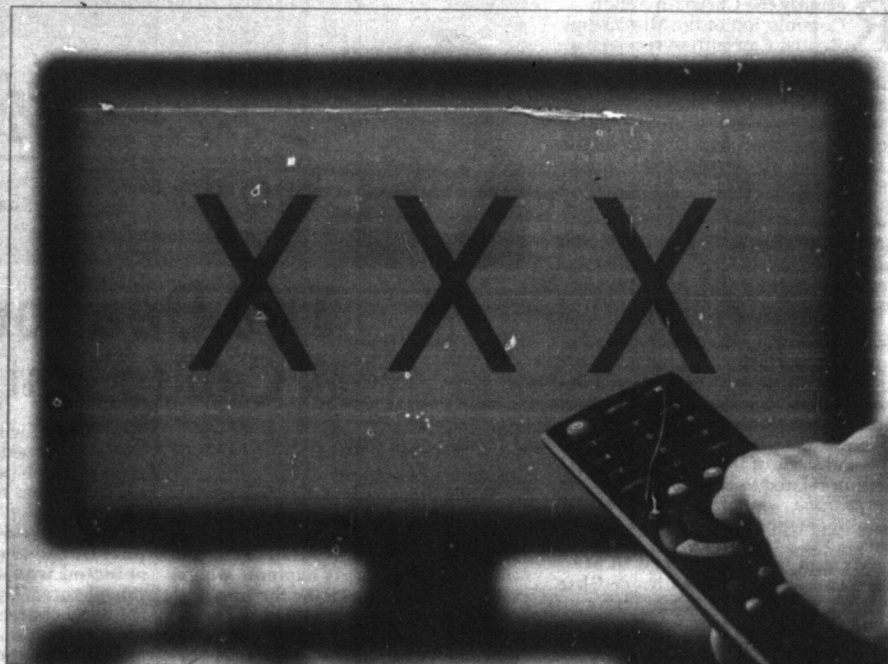
In Germany, same sex couples have been able to register civil partnerships that legally fall short of formal marriage since 2001. Heterosexual married couples, unlike same-sex couples, can reduce their tax burden by filing joint income tax returns, thus paying less than single taxpayers.

Merkel's party accepts partnerships, but many in her coalition are reluctant to go further. The German Constitution states that "marriage and the family shall enjoy the special protection of the state."

Opposition parties and the Free Democrats, the junior partners in Merkel's center-right coalition who have long called for a change, welcomed the lawmakers' call but it may be a tough sell to some of their own colleagues — not least those in the Christian Social Union (CSU), the socially conservative Bavarian sister party to Merkel's Christian Democrats.

Gerda Hasselfeldt, the head of the CSU's parliamentary group in Berlin, told German news agency DAPD she was "extremely skeptical" about granting same-sex couples equal tax treatment.

"Marriage between a man and a woman has special protection because it is fundamentally directed at the propagation of life," she said. "That is not the case in homosexual relationships."



There was a 407% increase in pixelated/masked full nudity on broadcast television in the 2011-12 television year according to a new study.

Nudity on TV before children's bedtime quadruples in one year

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — America's parents likely don't need any evidence that television content is getting worse, but a new study shows there was a 407% increase in pixelated/masked full nudity on broadcast television in the 2011-12 television year — most of it occurring before 9 p.m. and little of it containing the appropriate warning.

The study by the Parents Television Council (PTC) is but the latest one showing that television is only getting coarser. A 2010 PTC study showed that profanity on broadcast TV had increased by 60 percent from five years earlier.

In light of the newest study PTC President Tim Winter sent a letter to members of the U.S. House of Representatives Aug. 20 asking them to "give the FCC [Federal Communications Commission, which regulates public airwaves] your full support for decency enforcement."

He also asked them to urge the FCC to "move forward with all due haste in clearing the backlog of 1.6 million unadjudicated indecency complaints."

"Contrary to what executives from NBC, ABC, and CBS told you in 2004 and 2005, and contrary to what attorneys for the networks recently argued before the Supreme Court, they are not acting in the public interest; they are

"Contrary to what executives from NBC, ABC, and CBS told you in 2004 and 2005, and contrary to what attorneys for the networks recently argued before the Supreme Court, they are not acting in the public interest; they are aggressively pursuing a dangerous agenda to completely obliterate any remaining television taboos."

Tim Winter

Parents Television Council President

aggressively pursuing a dangerous agenda to completely obliterate any remaining television taboos," Winter wrote.

The PTC study did not include animated programs, traditional news shows, or sports, and only included scenes in which the individuals were "completely unclothed" and only the sexual organs were "blocked from the viewer." Among the study's findings:

■ There were 76 incidents of nudity on 37 shows in 2011-12, an increase from 2010-11 when there were 15 incidents on 14 shows.

■ Nearly 70% of the scenes in 2011-12 that depicted nudity occurred before 9 p.m. and as early as 7 p.m., when children might still be awake. The previous year, 50% of the scenes took place before 9 p.m.

■ ABC (14) and NBC (12) led the way with episodes depicting nudity, with CBS (7), Fox (2) and CW (2) trailing.

■ Of the 76 instances of nudity during 2011-12, only five took place during a show with the appropriate "S" (sexual content) descriptor at the beginning of the program.

Among the programs with nudity were ABC's *Suburgatory* and *The Bachelor*, and NBC's *The Office*, *Betty White's Off Their Rockers*, and *America's Got Talent*.

Some companies have created products to assist parents who want cleaner television. One company, ClearPlay, sells a DVD player that mutes bad language and also skips objectionable scenes. While that doesn't help with broadcast TV, it does offer a solution for those willing to wait until their favorite programs are released on DVD.

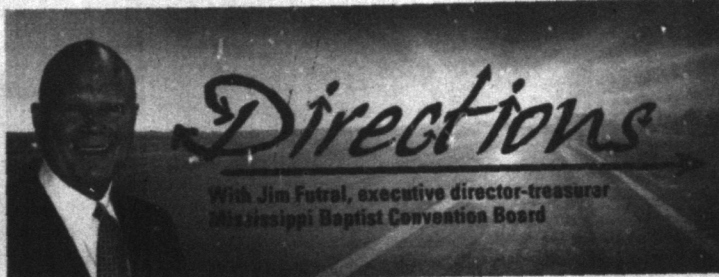
Another company, TV-Guardian, sells a unit that mutes profanity on broadcast television by monitoring closed captioning.

Recently the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention received a call inquiring as to what might be the longest tenure of service for a deacon in one of our Mississippi Baptist churches. In their church, the Mission Hill Baptist Church of Lincoln Baptist Association, Mr. Burdette Rutland has served as a deacon for 64 years. While those kinds of detailed records are not available to us here at the Convention, many of us have personally tried to find out if someone has served that long or longer. So far, none have been found.

I thought that I would cast the net a little wider all across our state and ask you to please write or email me if you know of someone who has served that long in your church or from your family. I would love to hear from you, and if you would please take the time to give me some of the important information related to that deacon — where they served, when they served, and any kind of personal insights that you may have.

My congratulations go to Mr. Rutland for that is an incredible tenure of service. While I have known of deacons who were ordained in their 20s, more have been in their 30s and 40s simply because it takes some time to have proven life experiences and to strengthen a core relationship with the Lord. It not only strengthens the individual's life but it will strengthen a body of believers.

Serving as a deacon is a wonderful calling that I believe comes from God to the serious, right-hearted man who wants to walk with God and serve others. It is also a calling that comes from the congregation as they see, hear, and are blessed not so much by leadership skills as by a lifestyle representative of Jesus. I have had the privilege through the years to serve with so many deacons who were literally giants, and they have shaped my life and ministry. Most of them most of you would never have heard of but oh what a blessing they have been to me. Names like Elmer, Acy, Bud, Trice, Jimmy, Steve, Gene, John, James, and Philip. All of these names may mean little or nothing to you, but they have had a huge impact on my life as they



The Deacon A Call to Duty

served as deacons. They are who and what I think of when I think of a biblical model of deacons.

While the length of people's service is an incredible thing, undergirding all that a deacon is supposed to do are biblical truths that make all of the time worthwhile. In Acts Chapter 6, where we find what seems to be the first selection of men who served as deacons, we also find some indications as to why they are needed. What are the deacons supposed to be doing?

The first thing in serving. In fact, in that Scripture the 12 disciples called the multitude of the congregation together and said, "It is impossible for us to do all that needs to be done. We need to select seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit, and wisdom who will come alongside of us and enable the ministry to be strengthened and excel." While it is certainly an honor to serve as a deacon, it is not an honorary position. It is a position of servanthood. The word deacon itself is the word for servant or minister. It is a word that describes someone who in real terms touches the lives of others.

Just the other day I was visiting with a man who is one of the busiest men I know. He serves as a deacon in his church. After talking with him for a while, he said, "I am sorry but I am going to have to run. I have hospital visitation duties this afternoon. I have to go and take care of those responsi-

bilities and I will check with you later." I was so blessed as he walked away and went to touch people's lives at the moments of great need. That is deacon ministry.

The second thing that was a part of those early deacons being selected was swerving. Now get this picture! There was a problem in the early church. There were groups of Hebrew widows and groups of Grecian widows at odds. The murmuring began for some felt neglected. These men who were selected were going to help the entire body and the disciples get around that issue. Now some people would say that you do not have to swerve around anything and they choose to live their lives that way.

I recall late one night a few years ago I was driving down one of our dark country roads making my way back home. I hit my brakes because just up in front of me there was a tire, rim and all, right in the middle of the road. Realizing that I was not going to be able to stop fast enough, I saw that there were no cars in the other lane around me so I swerved and missed the tire. Getting around it I stopped, went back, and rolled the tire off of the road into the side ditch. My other option was to just face it straight on, keep my foot on the gas, and hit it wide open. That would have been a brilliant move. I chose to swerve.

Through the years, I have watched

as deacons with great wisdom have seen a problem arise in the church or on the periphery of a church family and rather than just making a problem into a crisis, they had the wisdom, foresight, and influence to swerve around it to meet the need, solve the problem, and avoid catastrophe. In the book of Acts, Chapter 6, the problem that is prevented is never seen again in that church.

The third thing that I find in these verses describing a deacon is that they were preserving. In Acts 6:5 it says, "That the saying pleased the whole multitude." Acts 6:7 says, "The word of God increased and the numbers of the disciples multiplied greatly." You see what these early deacons did is that they preserved the unity of the fellowship. That is not only a good thing; it is essential for us to accomplish what God wants for us as believers and as His church.

It is virtually impossible to see the glory of God and the goodness of God in an old fashioned church fight. Fussing and fighting, mumbling and grumbling among the people of God are not commendable characteristics. In fact, it is everything but the fulfillment of the great prayer that Jesus prayed in John 17 for His followers to be one so that the world might know who He is and what He came to do. So these early deacons were fulfilling a wonderful piece of God's plan preserving the unity, and they still do. But the other thing that they preserved was the focus of the congregation itself. "And the word of God increased and the disciples multiplied greatly." That is the reason the church exists and that is the reason that deacons are needed.

To the thousands of men who serve as deacons across our state, thank you! Thank you for your faithfulness. Thank you for your support and your service to our Lord Jesus. And to the many more thousands of you, who have been touched and blessed by some faithful, genuine servant in your deacon body, why not take the time to let him know how much his life, his service, and his example have meant to you.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment

of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Sylvia Rena Church, Yalobusha County:** July 22 - 25, with 17 baptisms, 7 church additions, and two acknowledging a call to the ministry. Sam Moore, speaker; Ken Miller, music.

► **Moak's Creek Church, Summit:** 142nd homecoming, Sept. 2; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch.

► **Vardaman Church, Kemper County:** Homecoming, Sept. 2; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by covered dish meal; Buddy Puryear, speaker; Dennis Robinson, pastor.

Just for the Record

EAST END CHURCH, COLUMBUS, recently honored their WWII veterans for their service. Shown, seated, are W.J. Page, James Hart, Floyd Land, and M.P. Bidy; standing, A.L. Cummings, Elbert Lawrence, C.A. Dodson, and Robert Smith Brewer.



NESHOBA ASSOCIATION offers a midweek Bible study for the community led by Glenn Jackson, AMD. Six ladies received a certificate of completion. Shown are Bobbie Steward, Alice Riley, Jackson, and Joyce Loving.



(At Left) Neal Cordell and his wife Sharon were recognized by **RIVERPORT CHURCH, GREENVILLE**, on his 26th anniversary of service July 29. Cordell received gifts and was given a fellowship and anniversary dinner.



(At Right) **FIRST CHURCH, BELMONT**, hosted an appreciation day service for two of its long-time instrumental musicians. Georgia Lee, left, has served as pianist for 35+ years and Barbara Moore, right, has served as organist for 15+ years. A love offering in their honor was given to the House of Prayer Church in Ufa, Russia. A dinner was held in honor of the two families.



The Children in Action group of **CONCORD CHURCH, BENTON-TIPPAH ASSOCIATION** participated in the 4th of July patriotic cake baking contest. Shown are winners Lucas Ledbetter and Cody Pannell.



THE SANCTUARY CLASS OF CALVARY CHURCH, WAYNESBORO, donated to the Baptist Children's Village in Waynesboro.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

ERX UYAR MYEGG UYAQ MAA UYA MCR

CZ JER NCJBRW BR E NGCDX LBUY

SCLAP ERX WPAEU WGCPQ.

GDIA ULARUQ-CRA: ULARUQ-MAKAR

Clue: U = T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: John Eight: Twenty-nine

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



THE YOUTH OF WEST MARKS CHURCH, MARKS, attended a youth camp trip to Crossings in Kentucky.

Vacation Bible School



VALLEY PARK CHURCH, VALLEY PARK: June 4 - 8.



NORTH UNION CHURCH, ATTALA ASSOCIATION: June 4 - 6; Malaysia longhouse project missions offering, \$55.



NEW SALEM CHURCH, MCCALL CREEK:
June 29 - 30;
enrollment,
26; Troy
Burroughs,
pastor.

In other VBS News:

➤ **First Church, Benndale:** June 25 - 29; total enrollment, 95; sixteen professions of faith.



GOOD-WATER CHURCH, MEEHAN:
June - 14 -
18; forty-four
children and
20 adults en-
rolled; Baptist
Children's Vil-
lage offering,
\$100.28.



WEST MARKS CHURCH, MARKS: Average attendance, 85.

THE ORIGINAL
CHURCHES.

LORD, CHANGE ME
DAN O'LING
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Just for the Record



(Above) **ROCKY POINT CHURCH, CARTHAGE**, ordained Jason Moore as deacon Aug. 12. He is shown with his wife, Emalea. Shane McGivney, pastor.

(Below) **STEELE CHURCH, FOREST**, recently held a GA recognition service. Shown are Skylar Sharp, Kaylee Sharp, Jayden Latham, Densie McDill, Blair Latham, and Emily Rushing. Charnell Sharp, GA director.



CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, sent 20 youth and leaders to camp in Charleston, S.C. Hal Hatten, pastor.



NORTH CARROLLTON CHURCH, CARROLLTON, held their first Biker's Sunday Aug. 12.



COUNTY LINE CHURCH, UNION, recognized Lemuel Williams for his many years as brotherhood secretary-treasurer. Shown are Williams, Bob Dearing, and pastor David Jay.

(Below) **WILLIAMSVILLE CHURCH, KOSCIUSKO**, held a men's only desert fellowship recently. Danny Plunkett is shown with his winning cake in the shape of a church van.



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3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

In other Church News:

► **Bluff Springs Church, Magnolia**, will host the Southern Plainsmen in concert Sept. 2, 6:30 p.m., followed by a fellowship.

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MC Law to honor former dean, judge with lectureship series

JACKSON, Miss. (Special) — Mississippi Baptists know Mary Libby Payne for her lifelong service to Christ. First enrolled on the Cradle Roll at First Church, Gulfport, she has participated in her faith in almost every conceivable way as a member of several First Baptists: Columbus, Oxford, Clinton, and Jackson, and, since 1967, at McLaurin Heights Church in Pearl.

As she and her husband Bob raised two sons, Reece and Glenn, she continued to serve, eventually chairing several committees of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

While Payne describes herself as a happy product of Mississippi Baptists, the Mississippi legal profession knows her for her trailblazing legal career. To honor her career of Christian service and legal accomplishment, the Mississippi College School of Law in Jackson has established the Mary Libby Payne Lectureship Series on Christianity and the Law. The inaugural event occurs September 27, 2012. ||

Payne first attended the Mississippi University for Women to study ballet, but soon realized that God had called her to practice law — a difficult path for a woman to follow at that time. Nevertheless, Payne graduated first in her law class at the University of Mississippi in Oxford, one of only four women then attending the law school, and went on to achieve a significant career in private practice and Mississippi government service.

In 1975, Mississippi College recruited Payne first as interim dean and later as dean of the Mississippi College School of Law. Again a pioneer, this time as a woman law school dean, Payne trusted God for the grace to lead. She recog-



PAYNE

nized that, "Mississippi College School of Law is a product of the grace of God for His honor and glory and for the extension of His kingdom."

Under Payne's guidance as dean from 1975-78, the law school accomplished the transition from proprietary night school to a dual-division academic program well on its way to American Bar Association approval. While dean, she established the law school's Christian Legal Society.

After stepping down as dean, Payne taught at MC Law until 1994, when she was elected as a charter member of the Mississippi Court of Appeals and the first woman so to serve. She remained in this position until 2001.

Upon her retirement, Payne had served in all three branches of state government.

In 2003, Dean James Rosenblatt of MC Law invited Payne to write the history of MC Law. The product of six years of research and writing, *A Goodly Heritage:*

A Memoir of Mississippi College School of Law, shines a light on students, faculty, and administrators. In its text, former law students share numerous personal stories, and these many voices echo Payne's approach to teaching: each student was expected to speak, and each class began with a prayer.

Mary Libby Payne has received a number of accolades, including being named Woman of the Year by the Mississippi Association for Women in Higher Education in 1987. In 1989, she received life membership in the Fellows of the American Bar Association. Payne received the Governor's Medal of Service in 2011 and the Mississippi Bar's Women in the Profession Trailblazer Award in 2012.

Payne has established a "goodly heritage" (Ps. 16:6) through her unique illustration of what it means to be a Christian and an attorney. In response, MC Law and the Central Mississippi Chapter of the Christian Legal Society have planned the first Mary Libby Payne Lectureship Series on Christianity and the Law for September 27. The lecture series will continue as an annual event.

The first celebration will include a continuing legal education program, a book signing, a reception, and a banquet. Tom Morgan, professor at the George Washington University School of Law in Washington, D.C., and a noted speaker on the subject of Law and Faith, will deliver the first lecture.

Details of the day's events and registration materials are available from Tammy Upton at the Mississippi College School of Law (601) 925-7107, via e-mail at tupton@mc.edu, or online at www.law.mc.edu/cle.

OBITUARY

Calvin Miller — pastor, professor, author — dies following surgery

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — Seminary professor, theologian, and best-selling Christian author Calvin A. Miller died Aug. 19 of complications following open heart surgery. He was 75.

A former Southern Baptist pastor and professor at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Miller had served from 1999-2007 at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School, most recently as professor of preaching and pastoral ministry.

The author of more than 40 books, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry, he was described as a writer of love letters to the Lord. A reviewer of Miller's best-selling 1975 trilogy, *The Singer*, described Miller as a "troubadour, singing a love song to his Lord." Beeson dean Timothy George wrote on Beeson's website.

"Calvin Miller had a palpable love for Jesus Christ and his church," George wrote, "and he will be greatly missed both here at Beeson and throughout the Body of Christ."

Miller, in his most recent book, *Letters to Heaven*, wrote letters of love to Christians who died before him, including C.S. Lewis, whose writing style

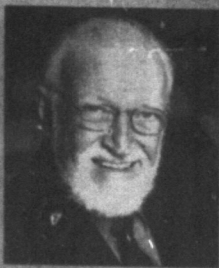
was said to be similar to Miller's. Life is Mostly Edges, Miller's memoir, was published in 1998.

He was founding pastor of Westside Church in Omaha, Neb., in 1966, and led that congregation for 25 years, shepherding it from just 10 members to more than 2,500, according to published reports. He pastored Plattsmouth Church in Nebraska from 1961-66.

At Southwestern Seminary, he was professor of communication and ministry studies and writer-in-residence from 1991-98 before joining Beeson's faculty.

Miller held a bachelor's degree from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee and M.Div. and D.Min. degrees from Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Survivors include his wife Barbara Joyce Miller and their children, Melanie and Timothy.



MILLER

Letters to the Editor

Unsigned letters will not be printed. Multi-copy and form letters will not be printed.

Each correspondent must include a home address and home telephone number for verification. Cell phone numbers are not acceptable. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing. Correspondents must refrain from personal attacks, offensive characterizations, and political partisanship. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

There is no guarantee that an individual's letter will be published. No more than one letter from an individual will be published during a six-month period.

When in the judgment of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with that issue will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

Support Boy Scouts

During the recent meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, a number of concerned messengers visited the Association of Baptists for Scouting booth to ask if they had heard correctly that the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) is planning to loosen their standards regarding requirements for adult leaders. I am pleased to say this is not the case. BSA remains committed to the moral and ethical standards which have been affirmed several times in Southern Baptist Convention resolutions.

Scouting remains one of the finest evangelism, family ministry, and religious education tools available for established churches as well as new church plants. Scouts and their families involved in the religious emblems program are often reached for Christ and it is not uncommon for youth participants to clarify their calling to vocational ministry.

While I am happy to report Scouting's commitment to the leadership standards, I remind readers that opponents to these policies are relentless and highly vocal. Unfortunately, the silent majority remains largely unheard. I believe this is an opportune time to encourage Southern Baptist churches and individual members to send a note of affirmation to BSA for the moral and ethical commitments to which they have remained true for 102 years. Their address is: Boy Scouts of America, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079.

R. Chip Turner
Ft. Worth, Texas

Editor's note: Turner is chairman of the BSA Religious Relationships Committee, and past national president of the Association of Baptists for Scouting. On July 12, BSA announced that it was reaffirming its policy of banning homosexuals from adult leadership positions.

Subtle implication

I enjoyed your editorial [How we govern ourselves, June 21], but

I think there is a subtle, yet critical omission. As you wrote about local church budgets, you seemed to imply that the local church is expected to forward on to the state convention all funds not allocated for "local ministries." That could very easily be misconstrued by ill-informed church members to mean that all "ministry except local ministry is delegated to the state and national convention."

More and more churches are adopting ministries in other states and even other countries and I believe it a mistake to leave the subtle implication that such is inappropriate, and that all non-local ministries should be channeled through the state convention. That hint of the very denominationalism that the preponderance of your article disproves.

Thank you for prayerfully considering these thoughts.

Mike Rasberry, pastor
Bay Springs Church,
Porterville

Kudos to Land

How sad it is to see one of the greatest minds and social conservative voices of our time retiring from his position as president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention. It goes without saying that Richard Land has been a faithful "Watchman on the wall," although in announcing his retirement there was not a trace of remorse. I personally believe that his retirement is, in part, due to the recent actions taken against him by the board of trustees of the ERLC. Considering his exemplary body of work, their actions whereby Dr. Land was reprimanded and his radio broadcast cancelled seem not only harsh, but reeks of political correctness. I join many in saying, "Thank you for your service and may the Lord bless you as you continue to be faithful to His call on your life." The Southern Baptist Convention and the United States of America are better today due to the courage, faith, and diligence of Dr. Richard Land.

Joey Barnard, pastor
Ethel Church, Ethel

NAMB

cont. from p. 1

challenges among ourselves we can absolutely establish a cleaner and clearer vision."

While the North American Mission Board organized and coordinated much of this first meeting, fellowship organizers hope participants can take on an increasing role in the new organization's management.

Sabbagh added that many churches from North African and Middle Eastern backgrounds are relatively small and will be able to reach out more effectively through joint efforts.

Masih hopes the newly formed fellowship will adopt at least one of the 30 cities Send North America targets and will

build partnerships to reach Arabs there. He'd also like the fellowship to select five regional coordinators to guide outreach in the five NAMB regions.

"If we can't reach the Arab population of North America, we can't reach them anywhere," Masih said. "With the religious freedoms we have on this continent, we can minister to Arabs in ways we can't in other countries." Churches with a passion to reach Middle Easterners and North Africans in their communities may contact Masih at amasih@namb.net for more information about the next fellowship meeting. The fellowship includes Southern Baptist Convention churches that are Arabic-speaking or sense God's call to reach Arab speakers in their community.

CLINIC

cont. from p. 1

now face in our own state.

"The reason the clinic closed in Knoxville is the very reason the clinic in Jackson should be closed," Porter said.

Mississippi legislators passed a law, similar to the Tennessee law, that was signed by Gov. Phil Bryant and also went into effect July 1, requiring all abortionists in Mississippi to be certified OB/GYNs with admitting privileges at a local hospital. However, a federal judge ruled earlier this summer that the Jackson Women's Health Organization can remain open while a lawsuit proceeds that was filed by the owner of the clinic.

The Knoxville facility could no longer meet its financial obligations because of an inability to see patients, said the center's owner, Deb Walsh, in a message to supporters.

"I'm so angry about this, also sad..." said Walsh, who had worked at the clinic for more than 30 years. The center had been open for 38 years, she said.

Pro-life advocates welcomed the closure, reducing to eight the number of abortion clinics in Tennessee. "Protective pro-life legislation saves lives," said Brian Harris, president of Tennessee Right to Life.

Meanwhile, The Fifth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans lifted a preliminary injunction on August 21 that was issued in April by a federal judge that had blocked implementation of the 2011 law that denies

state funding to groups affiliated with the Texas Medicaid Women's Health Program that "perform or promote elective abortions or affiliate with entities that perform or promote elective abortions."

The plaintiff, Planned Parenthood, failed to show it is "likely to succeed in demonstrating that the... restriction on promoting elective abortions violates their First Amendment rights," the Fifth Circuit, three-judge panel ruled. The judges returned the case to the federal court for consideration.

The ban reportedly affects only Planned Parenthood. More than 1,000 health-care providers certified for the program are not affiliated with abortion clinics, according to the Texas Alliance for Life.

In March, the Obama administration announced it would not grant a waiver to the women's health program because of the ban on Planned Parenthood, thereby ending federal funding for services to about 130,000 women. The federal government provides about 90% of the money for the program.

In response, Texas Gov. Rick Perry said he plans for the state to make up the funding difference left by the federal government's withdrawal. Perry welcomed the Fifth Circuit decision, saying it "is a win for Texas women, our rule of law and our state's priority to protect life."

Texas will continue providing important health services for women through this program in spite of the Obama

Administration's disregard for our state law and unilateral decision to defund this program," Perry said.

Pro-life advocates applauded the ruling as well. "Taxpayers should not be forced to pay for abortions or abortion advocacy," said Steven Aden, senior counsel of the Alliance Defending Freedom.

"The court's decision against the position of Planned Parenthood and the Obama administration again demonstrates that abortionists and their political allies are bluffing when they say that states cannot stop taxpayer funding from being used to subsidize abortions, whether directly or indirectly."

Planned Parenthood decried the Fifth Circuit action. "It is shocking that once again it appears that politics is getting in the way of women receiving access to basic health care," said Melaney Linton, president of Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast.

Affiliates of the Planned Parenthood Federal of America (PPFA) reported performing 329,445 abortions in 2010, again making PPFA America's No. 1 abortion provider. PPFA and its affiliates received \$487.4 million in government grants, contracts and reimbursements in 2009-10, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

The unanimous ruling was handed down by Mississippi E. Grady Jolly, a Reagan nominee; Harold R. DeMoss Jr., a George H.W. Bush nominee; and Carl E. Stewart, a Clinton nominee. Stewart concurred only in the judgment.

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ARREST

cont. from p. 1

Islamabad, some 1,000 men had gathered after the Friday prayers sermons where the local cleric had asked for the massacre of Christians in the neighborhood over blasphemy by a Christian girl, but due to timely action by the police, we were able to calm the crowd." Paul Bhatti (brother of Shahbaz Bhatti), adviser to the prime minister for National Harmony, told the Christian Science Monitor.

Police arrested the girl and charged her with blasphemy, and her parents were placed in protective custody. Bhatti said the police actions were done to

protect her and other Christians from vigilantes.

"If the girl was free and not in jail, it would have been impossible to protect her," he told the Monitor.

Media reports differ about the girl's mental health, with some reporting that she has Down syndrome while senior police officers told The Times she is "100% mentally fit."

Pakistani police and government officials say the accusations against the girl are baseless and the case will probably be dropped, according to media reports, but Christians have begun fleeing her neighborhood in fear of attacks by angry Muslims.

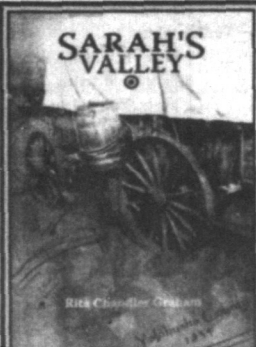


Director of Missions

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MSBA is an independent and sovereign association in itself, and respects the autonomy of the local congregation. We conform to the doctrine, policy and practice as expressed in the current Baptist Faith and Message.

Mid-South Baptist Association is a regional association made up of over 100 actively diverse churches with a total membership of over 60,000 resident members from Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas and Kentucky. We are a fellowship of Southern Baptist Churches committed to the Great Commission. In order to fulfill this mission our operational emphases are: (1) Church Planting and Revitalization, (2) Church Leadership Development, (3) Church Mobilization and (4) Associational Resource Development.



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to your special friends.

JULY 2012

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Jim & June Blair
June Shaffer
James & Lois Mitchell
Patricia Simpson
Ms. Mary Lou Lott
Peter Sims
Philene & Stuart Allen
Bill Smith
Mrs. Joyce C. Allen
Mrs. Jo Lynn Munro
Bobby Smith
Ladies SSC, Springdale BC
Mrs. Carolyn C. Smith
Jim & June Blair
William Barron "Billy" Smith
Sarah Alice & Eddie Johnson
Alma K. & Edgar Lamb
Ray & Sonya Abner

Mr. & Mrs. Chip Miller & Sons
Mr. Jaime Ruiz
Michael Spellman
Carrollton BC
Lannie Bob Stewart
Mrs. Joyce C. Allen
Mrs. Jeanette N. Strickland
Johnny & Sharon Wever
Wever
Mrs. Robert F. Neely Jr.
Mr. Warren Strong
Siloam BC, Meadville
Norma Sweeney
Jerry & Janie Sisco
Bill Sisco
Algoma Baptist Church
Brad Taggart
Ms. Ann Southerland
Mr. William "Bill" Taylor
Mrs. Joy B. Roberts
Mr. & Mrs. Rick Truitt
Ms. Laura T. Williamson
Bob Thompson
Bob & Johnnie Power
Billy & Bertha Thornton
J. C. & Celeste Rhymes
William W. Thornton
Woodmen of the World, Lodge 40A
Odie Mae Thrasher
Mrs. Julia Pachmayr
Vernon Martin Tigner
Mr. & Mrs. Jim Richmond
& Family
Elene Grantham Trussell
Mr. & Mrs. Larry K. Bennett
Teddy Utz
Mr. Charles Christmas
Hazel Vandevender
Mrs. Betty Crawford
Mr. Raphael T. "Ray" Verucchi Jr
Mr. & Mrs. J. V. Parker
Mr. Dan Herrington
Mr. Henry Wilson
Jim & Patricia Apperson
Morris Vincent
Mr. & Mrs. B. R. Taylor
Mrs. Gigi Wall
Dr. & Mrs. Jim Brewer
Leonard Wallace
Mr. Jim Boozer
Horace Webb
Ms. Ruth Rester
Billie West
Mrs. Shirley Owen
Earline White
Whitney & Will McCurdy
Billy & Janie Smith
William Scott & Traci Smith
Jerry White
Stanton BC, Natchez
Sharon White
Philene & Stuart Allen
Chase Wilbanks
Charles & Nancy Wilbanks
Mr. Olin Windle
Mrs. Lona M. Southerland
Mr. Glen Womack
Mr. & Mrs. Hubert T. Kendrick
Arthur & Alicia Powell
Burnett
Lamar Young
Ralph & Barbara Hunt
Jimmy & Jo Jenkins

Living With Hope • 1 Peter 1:1-12

The theme for this quarter in Explore the Bible is "Living through Tough Times". Christians today are living in the toughest times since the great depression. The economic recession, the secularization of government and education, and the moral liberalism of society and many mainline denominations are felt by all of us.

This quarter's study of 1 & 2 Peter & Jude will help believers not only survive, but thrive in these tough times. Two truths grow out of 1 Peter 1:1-12 that should give Christians hope and strength in the midst of difficulties.

1. The Truth About Divine Election (v.v. 1-5)

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world, scattered...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood" (v.v. 1-2, NIV).

What does Peter mean by "God's elect" (v. 1)? Election refers to God's choice to initiate salvation and forgiveness of sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Election does not override man's freedom to choose or reject Christ. Israel was "God's elect people", but they

were not all saved because they did not all receive Jesus Christ by faith.

The fact that God took the initiative in our salvation should give us hope in difficult times, because it reminds us that He is also taking the initiative to help us in the trials of life. A literal translation of Romans 8:28

reads

something

like this:

"We know

that to

them that

love God

all things

"He works

together"

for good

according

to His purpose."

"He works together" is

"synergy" in Greek. God creates a "divine

synergy" in the lives of those who love

Him. He is at work making everything

work together for our good and his glory.

2. The Truth About Christian Suffering (v.v. 6-9)

In this you greatly rejoice, though now

for a little while you may have had to suffer

grief in all kinds of trials. These have come

so that your faith - of greater worth than

gold...may be proved genuine and may re-

sult in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (v.v. 6b-7, NIV).

Suffering as a result of trials in life is a reality that every Christian must endure. We are not exempt from the problems that are common to man, but Christians may also endure "special trials" to test their

faith

or

to accom-

plish God's

greater

purposes in

the world.

For ex-

ample, we

know that

the trials

encoun-

tered by

Job were

allowed by God to test the integrity of his

faith. Satan accused Job of only serving

God for the blessings, so God allowed Satan

to test Job to prove Satan wrong and

Job righteous.

Christians today will encounter trials

similar to Job's that are intended to

test the integrity of their faith. They may

not understand why they are suffering or

what God is trying to accomplish in their

lives. The whole point is to test whether

they will "curse God and die" like Job's

wife suggested, or will they say like Job, "though he slay me, yet will I hope in Him" (Job 13:15).

Job passed his test by being faithful to God even in the worst of times. God restored His blessings to Job, making him "more prosperous at the end of his life than at the beginning" (Job 42:12).

Consider Joseph as another example. Joseph had a dream as a young boy that God had a great plan for his life. But he would have never chosen the path to fulfillment that was required of him: hated by his brothers, torn from his family, sold as a slave, accused of adultery, thrown in a dungeon, faithful to God in his trial, an interpreter of dreams, elevated to second in command in Egypt, savior of all Israel.

Dear Christian, if you are suffering trials, realize that God loves you. He took the initiative in your salvation, he is working in your circumstances, and he will reward your faithfulness! Be faithful to Him in the midst of your trials and you too can be more blessed at the end of your life than at the beginning!

If you have never asked Jesus to forgive your sins and direct your life, He is ready to receive you today. Just ask Him.

Bishop is a member of Harrisburg Church, Tupelo.



Explore the Bible

with David B. Bishop

Developing the Right Qualities • Matthew 5:1-16

In the sermon on the mount, Christ gave his disciples their agenda of who, what, where and why. Eight beatitudes and we are the recipients. Then in V. 13-16 He pronounces them as the salt and light of the world.

Immediately, we see the accessibility of Christ. No bars, no boundaries, come one, come all. I'm here out of love, and am going to teach you what evils to abhor, how the gospel can reform you, and how to access heaven. It must have gladdened their hearts to hear him speak. We long to see this attitude revived in our churches today.

The beatitudes are not for eight separate groups of people, but are simply eight qualities applicable to the SAME group. There are specific characteristics and blessings for every Christian's life. He begins with blessings, for He came to bless us (Acts 3:26 NIV Study Bible).

We confuse happiness with blessedness. Some of us are slow to learn that Disney World should not be our primary goal. Jesus is exposing fundamental misconceptions and is setting our hearts straight. He expresses in understandable ways what blessings are and where they are. He tells us what God expects from us and what we may expect from Him. Plainly, there are present blessings and future blessings.

So who is happy? The poor in spirit. Those who have emptied self to make room for Christ. We must learn how to be abased (Phil. 4:12 NIV Study Bible), properly bearing losses and exercising a thankful heart. We can say Job was poor in spirit when he decided to bless God in the taking away

as well as in

the giving.

Self-denial

fits the soil

to receive

the seed.

V 4, 5

and 6 -

They who

mourn are

happy? Re-

ally? Jesus himself was a mourner. Be

a gracious mourner, mourn for your

own sins and for sins of others. Christ

wept over Jerusalem. Our blessings

come from being like Christ so we

must be discerners of Christ's ways.

The meek are happy - those who

quietly, without an audience, love

and learn God's ways and make ap-

plications in our private walk. Be soft

and gentle with your family, pastor,

neighbors, boss, or employees. Your

sweetness, and a healthier life with

less chaos.

Being hungry and thirsty for right-



Bible Studies for Life

with Evelyn Gibson



teousness makes you happy. Righteousness is a quality imputed to us by God and inclines us toward Christ. We are to have a long lasting earnest desire for this drive toward spiritual blessings. Give me this and it will be enough! No deceit here but much satisfaction.

When we

grade our

efforts, are

our scores

accept-

able? Have

we dared

stretch our

influence

beyond our-

selves?

V 7, 8 and 9 - The merciful are

happy. Practice pity, and offer help

for those less fortunate. Your inten-

tionality and your willingness go a

long way, for God accepts our positive

thoughts and efforts. Simplify this by

heightening your sense of oughtness

and choosing to do good. Discover

that it is more blessed to give than to

receive (Acts. 20:35 NIV Study Bible).

Pure in heart are happy - Christi-

anity thrives in an unclouded heart.

Peace-makers are happy. Partici-

pate in peaceful conversations with

families, friends, jobs, situations,

churches, and be strengthened. Learn

to quickly forgive, repair the breaches, and enjoy the blessings.

V 10-12 - Those persecuted for righteousness sake are happy. Followers of Christ, his disciples, and us, are at times suffering saints, reviled, abused, ignored, tortured, and we must not think it strange when the world hates us. The kingdom of heaven will be ours. It is not in site yet, but it's there.

V 13-16 - Salt of the earth and light of the world. We can't withdraw from the church, community, family, or world, but must be activated to mingle and make known our Christian convictions. We cannot avoid being an influence - do nothing and negative influence seeps out, do good and suffer sometimes, but don't ignore opportunities to glorify Christ.

Salt was required in all sacrifices and now New Testament Christians are called salt of the earth. We must possess it to diffuse among others. The disciples were sent forth with a supply to be scattered. We're also lights of the world, and the gospel news is our light to spread. Our examples teach. Are they good enough to tolerate the spotlight of the Sermon on the Mount?

Gibson is a member of Monticello Church, Monticello.

College News

► **Mississippi College** is hosting Fall Preview Days September 8 and November 3. Activities on September 8 begin with a 1 p.m. check-in at

Nelson Hall. The check-in time will be 8 a.m. in the B.C. Rogers Student Center for students and parents going on November 3. Events on the Septem-

ber 8 schedule include the MC Choctaws 2012 season opener with Webber International at Robinson-Hale Football Stadium. Kickoff is at 6 p.m.

Students interested in joining the MC equestrian team are also invited to the squad's headquarters, Providence Hill Farm. The equestrian team is

beginning its sixth season. For more information, contact the MC Office of Enrollment Services at (601) 925-3800 or go to admissions@mc.edu.

Pastors say economy woes still affecting giving at church

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Pastors say the economy continues to have a negative impact on their churches despite stabilized giving, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

The survey of 1,000 Protestant pastors asked respondents, "How is the economy impacting your church?" Nearly two-thirds (64%) responded negatively, with 56% indicating somewhat negatively and eight percent very negatively.

One-fourth of the pastors surveyed chose, "The economy has had no impact on my church," while nine percent indicated a positive impact on their churches.

"Pastor views on the economy are similar to many economic outlook surveys," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. "We weren't surprised the current perspective of economic impact on churches is predominantly negative."

However, there is some good news. LifeWay Research found that while the sluggish economic recovery has translated into flat or reduced giving for many churches, the trend continues of fewer

churches reporting declines in giving:

- 23% of churches had lower giving in 2010 than 2009.

- 19% of churches had lower giving in 2011 than in 2010.

- Through May 2012, giving for 15% of churches has been below 2011.

Similarly, fewer churches are failing to meet budget expectations. Through May 2011, giving for 27% of churches was below budget. At the same time in 2012, only 22% of churches reported giving below budget — a five percent decrease from the year before.

The trend seems to indicate a stabilization of giving rather than widespread increases in giving. Through May 2011, 36% of churches saw giving the same as 2010. Through May 2012, 40% of churches saw giving the same as 2011.

"Many people refer to the 'new normal' of tighter consumer spending, but it appears there has been no adjustment in economic expectations," McConnell said.

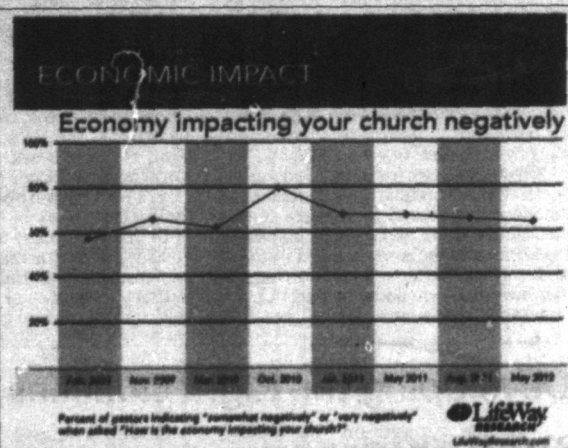
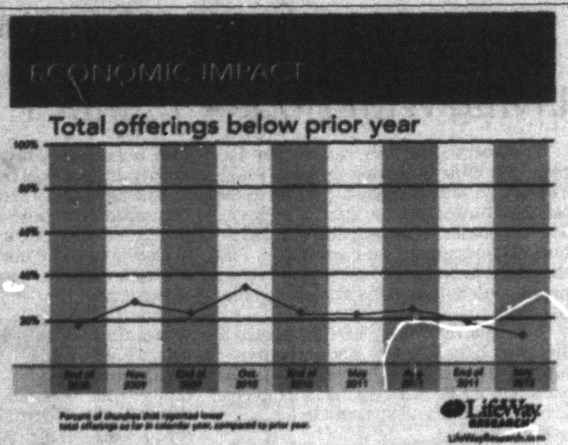
Pastors and Americans in general are still disappointed when they experience a lack

of consistent or increasing growth."

According to the survey, a larger percentage of pastors serving in large cities and the suburbs (72% in both areas) cited a negative impact on their church from the economy in 2012 than those serving in small cities (63%) and rural areas (61%).

Also, a higher percentage of pastors in the West (71%) said the current state of the economy was having a negative impact on their churches compared to churches in the Northeast, South, and Midwest (all at 63%).

Methodology: The telephone survey, conducted in May 2012, sampled 1,000 randomly selected Protestant pastors. The sample provides 95% confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus/minus 3.2%. Margins of error are higher in subgroups. Comparisons are also made to the following telephone surveys using the same methodology: 1,000 pastors conducted March 1-9, 2010; 1,002 pastors conducted January 17-27, 2011; 1,000 pastors conducted May 18-25, 2011.



Appeals court deals major loss to stem cell research opponents

WASHINGTON (BP and other reports) — A federal appeals court again has dealt a setback to an effort to halt government funding of stem cell research that requires the destruction of human embryos.

A three-judge panel of the District of Columbia Circuit Court of Appeals on Aug. 24 unanimously upheld a federal judge's dismissal of a legal challenge to President Obama's 2009 executive order that overturned a more restrictive funding policy under President George W. Bush.

As a result of the latest decision, federal guidelines continue to allow funding for research on stem cells derived from embryos created by in vitro fertilization.

Many scientists and biotech firms have promoted embryonic stem cell research (ESCR), and federal funds for the experimentation, even though the extraction of such cells from an embryo results in the destruction of the days-old human being.

While advocates say the embryonic cells hold great promise for developing cures for various diseases, actual results have been disappointing. ESCR has yet to provide any treatments for human beings and has been plagued by tumors in lab animals.

Meanwhile, research with adult stem cells and induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells has garnered more headlines. Adult stem cells have produced therapies for more than 70 afflictions, while iPS cells have demonstrated promising results.

As a result, ESCR has fallen out of

favor with a growing number of scientists and biotech companies.

Critics of the Obama policy expressed disappointment that the appeals court did not see it as a violation of the 1996 Dickey-Wicker Amendment, an annual spending bill rider which bars federal funds for "research in which a human embryo or embryos are destroyed, discarded, or knowingly subjected to risk of injury or death."

The amendment is named for two of its sponsors, one of whom is U.S. Sen. Roger Wicker of Mississippi.

"There would be no embryonic stem cells available for federal funding without first harming and destroying a young human embryo, an act that is prohibited by [Dickey-Wicker]," said David Prentice, the Family Research Council's senior fellow for life sciences. "A plain reading of Dickey-Wicker would eliminate all taxpayer funds for embryonic stem cell research. Federal funding of embryonic stem cell research is a tragic waste of lives as well as taxpayer money, since despite the promises made to gain the federal funding, there is not a single example of a successful treatment."

Steven Aden, senior counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, said, "Americans should not be forced to pay for experiments that destroy human life, have produced no real-world treatments, and violate federal law. That law's clear intent has been utterly ignored. Congress designed that law so that Americans don't pay any more precious taxpayer dollars

for needless research made irrelevant by adult stem cell and other research. In the current economic climate, it makes even less sense for the Obama administration to use taxpayer money for this illegal and unethical purpose."

The D.C. Appeals Court judges agreed with a 2011 decision by a three-judge panel of the same circuit, saying "research" as used in Dickey-Wicker is ambiguous. They abided by the previous panel's ruling deferring to NIH's interpretation that "research" might be understood to exclude "the initial derivation" of embryonic stem cells.

"Under that interpretation, Dickey-Wicker permits federal funding of research projects that utilize already-derived ESCs — which are not themselves embryos — because no 'human embryo or embryos are destroyed' in such projects," the panel wrote Aug. 24.

In July 2010, Royce Lamberth, chief judge of the D.C. District Court, ruled the NIH guidelines violated Dickey-Wicker. He suspended federal funding for ESCR. In September, however, a D.C. Circuit Court panel lifted Lamberth's suspension while the case went forward. In a 2-1 decision in April 2011, the panel returned the case to Lamberth but virtually killed the challenge.

In July 2011, Lamberth said the appeals court's April decision "constrains this Court," forcing him to dismiss the lawsuit.

Lamberth rejected in his 2010

opinion arguments by the Obama administration that Dickey-Wicker is ambiguous and permits federal funding for research on stem cells after they have been removed from embryos. The appeals court, however, agreed in its April 2011 opinion that Dickey-Wicker is ambiguous, saying although the law "bars funding for the destructive act of deriving an [embryonic stem cell] from an embryo, it does not prohibit funding a research project in which an [embryonic stem cell] will be used."

The appeals court's determination that the word "research" in the law "is ambiguous binds" him, Lambert wrote three months later.

All three judges in the latest appeals court ruling are Republican nominees. President Reagan nominated David Sentelle, who wrote the opinion. President George H.W. Bush selected Karen Henderson, and President George W. Bush nominated Janice Rogers Brown.

Henderson voted against the majority in the April 2011 ruling but said in a concurring opinion Aug. 24 the earlier decision is binding in this case.

The case is *Sherley v. Sebelius*.

Obama's 2009 executive order overturned a prohibition instituted by Bush on federal funding of stem cell research that results in the destruction of embryos. Bush's 2001 order permitted grants for experiments on stem cell lines, or colonies, already in existence at the time of his action.